ilm Monthly Review

Informational Film and Television Year Book 1949-50

Third annual survey of the non-theatrical cinema. Films of the Year, Documentary Who's Who, Technical Section, Television and comprehensive Directory. Illustrated.

12s. 6d. By post **13s.**

Ballet Vignettes

Arnold L. Haskell

"A valuable addition to the balletomane's library . . . An essential half-guinea's-worth"—**Ballet Today.** With a unique collection of photographs.

10s. 6d. By post **11s.**

ALBYN PRESS, 42 Frederick Street, Edinburgh, 2

Film Studios Club

Caters for all sections of the FILM INDUSTRY, THEATRE, RADIO and the PRESS

★ **Producers** ★ **Artistes**

★ **Exhibitors** ★ **Renters**

★ **Publicists** ★ **Technicians**

Where you can meet all the talents of Screen and Stage in an atmosphere of informality . . . *and bonhomie*

Subscription One Guinea. No Entrance Fee.

Full particulars from:—

The Secretary, Film Studios Club, 37-39 Oxford Street, London, W.1.

FILM MONTHLY REVIEW

OCTOBER 25, 1949 Vol. 7. No. 9

EDITORIAL

IN last month's issue, Cavalcanti, as our guest editorial writer, expressed his disgust at the poor quality of post-war British films. Shortly after this, he left Britain for his native Brazil.

We say that there is something gravely wrong with a film industry that reduces to despair a fine artist like Cavalcanti.

This pioneer has given the best years of his life to the making of films. It is particularly sad that he should have received his final disillusionment in a Socialist Britain.

Now, Dr. Eric Fletcher is a Socialist M.P. He is also deputy-chairman of the powerful Associated British Picture Corporation. And those of us who saw *For Them That Trespass* will recall that Associated British was the last film company to abuse Cavalcanti's talents.

What we would like to know is how Dr. Fletcher can reconcile his professed idealism with his Corporation's activities.

Elsewhere Within

The Critics Criticised *by Andre Belhomme* 4
"The Set-up," "Champion" and "Force of Evil" *by Charles Higham* 6
THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE 9
The Freedom of the Screen *by R. E. Whitehall* ... 18
STRICTLY PICTORIAL 19
News from the Studios *by Brian Robins* 28
Record Review *by John Huntley* 32
FILM REVIEWS 33
Book Guide 35
SCREENWRITERS SECTION 36
Television Developments *by Jacqueline Mallet* 40
At the Theatre 42

COVER STILL: "Wait! Don't come in . . ." cries Lea Padovani to Sam Wanamaker in Edward Dmytryk's *Give Us This Day.*

Edited by Robert Hirst

All communications to:—Precinct Publications, 50 Old Brompton Road, London, S.W.7. (FREmantle 7120.)

THE CRITICS CRITICISED

by
Andre Belhomme

" The curt dismissal of a film as ' bad ' is of no service whatever to cinematic art. Nor is the egoistical indulgence of sarcasm."

AT least two distinguished critics, in the sister sphere of the theatre, have expressed refreshingly enlightened views on their controversial craft.

It was Ivor Brown, in " The Observer," who endorsed the statements of another eminent critic, Beverley Baxter, M.P., contained in the latter's book, " First Nights and Noises Off," in which the writer said: " Those who sit to write critiques should also stand up to be criticised," and added that critics were " thin-skinned and omnipotent." Ivor Brown, however, dissented on " omnipotent."

Beverley Baxter further added that the critic's work " should be constantly under review and that they should be subjected to every form of attack from authors, producers and playwrights."

It has not yet come to my notice as to whether any film critics have so gallantly invited assault upon their judgments, but we know that one particular film company, on their own volition, took up the glove before it was thrown.

" Out of Touch "

Their hotly-contested letter to the B.B.C. Director of Talks complained that a certain radio film critic was " completely out of touch with the tastes and entertainment requirements of the picture-going millions, who are also radio listeners, and her criticisms are on the whole unnecessarily harmful to the film industry."

Whilst having nothing whatsoever against this critic personally, I must come down on the film company's side. This was putting the Beverley Baxter maxim into action—the right to hit back; in this case, at the "incisive wit" employed in criticising *The Green Years*.

We know that the film company, who originally defended the charge of libel unsuccessfully, to the tune of £1,500 damages for the critic, ultimately had the award repealed in the Court of Appeal.

" Gross Inaccuracies "

Now I myself was closely associated with a most outrageous example of distorted, personal invective and thoroughly inartistic taste; a London film and stage critic described a play as "possibly the worst-written and worst-acted play in the West End." This was too much!

An objection was lodged, in no uncertain terms, in the right direction—and a letter was subsequently received from the editor of the paper, apologising for the "gross inaccuracies" expressed in the write-up. This editor is to be admired. For he recognises that a critic cannot always be allowed to take sanctuary behind his aloof and elevated desk.

London critics are, in the aggregate, possessed of much integrity. One respects them. Their fame is deserved, but capitalised upon, I am afraid, by some London monthly magazines, that frequently "lift" much of the work of these reviewers.

Unqualified Criticism

In the provinces, a source of great revenue to the film producer, the position is quite chaotic. The mass of unqualified criticism is, in my opinion, a gross travesty of the generally accepted fair-mindedness of the Press . . . we'll leave politics out of this!

Here, you have a situation which is ludicrous, fantastic. Journalists, many of them just out of their cubbing days, yet no doubt quite adept at their profession, are permitted to wield a totally unjustifiable power. With some exceptions, the self-styled provincial "critic" has an immense amount of fun tearing down the fabric of many a film and play, to the weaving of which has gone both honest, artistic desire and a tremendous amount of creative labour.

I have used the term "unqualified criticism" and must, therefore, say what I consider is criticism of a truly qualified nature.

The critic, in addition to a comprehensive knowledge of his *métier*, must have, agreed, an uncompromising standard by which he is entitled to assess the value of the work under criticism . . . but, he also *must* have that all-important sense of *perspective*.

Selfless Devotion, Please!

Art is evolutionary—as it is created, and as it is appreciated. Both aspects are reaching towards a higher degree of perfection. *The curt dismissal of a film as "bad" is not, therefore, of service to cinematic art.*

I well remember the occasion when, with reasonable skill, I applied logic to some of the more fallacious remarks uttered by friends in discussion circles. Logic is dynamic, but unless it is applied with grace it becomes a soulless, academic machine.

Therefore, if the complexion of the infant is not exactly to their liking, let the critics, who have themselves been spared the growing pains of the filmic baby, be more considerate.

For it is not particularly clever nor progressive to "make the point but lose the man." Presuming, of course, that there is an interest in the mutual discovery of the meaning of all majestic arts—and not merely the egoistical indulgence of sarcasm!

STUDIES IN REALISM . . .

'THE SET-UP,' 'CHAMPION' AND 'FORCE OF EVIL'

by Charles Higham

Three films with " freshness, warmth and verve," proving that a healthy Hollywood could well lead the world in good-quality pictures.

VIOLENCE and controversy, the exposition of prejudice and ferment, seem to be the motivational factors in a near-formula Hollywood style. Anti-Semitism, the " Numbers Racket," and now the colour bar, coinciding with pugilism, undergo a stripping process which may create rather than lessen difficulties.

The two latest efforts in the genre—" The Set-Up " and "Champion"—have the terse, uncompromising quality needed, but suffer from conventions which stem from scripts rather than the treatment employed.

Terror and Precision

Particularly is this true of **The Set-Up.** An over-age boxer (Robert Ryan) wins a fight against an over-confident youth and is savaged by his opponent's promoter. This, in effect, is the story, and its slightness is justified by expert dialogue and plot-development.

But Milton Kravner's photography reveals at once the traditional gloss, thus preparing us for the worst. Fortunately the worst is mere sentimentality, and both this and the gloss itself disappear after a time.

Such false issues as the boxer's dream about his far-off youth, the failure's declarations about his middleweight championship, and Ryan's wife ominously leaning over the railway bridge are permitted to creep in, thereby preventing perfection.

In the central bout, however—once the quick cutting from wife to husband has been eliminated—terror and precision take their proper place.

Authentic Atmosphere

Here, also, Robert Wise's direction—at once austere, vivid and sure—is allowed to re-create and intensify the atmosphere of the ring.

Heat prowls through the crowd and pounces in on the contestants; the anguished faces heave, shudder, grin and scowl; roar after roar throbs in under the arc-lamps, the sharp impersonal bell cutting across at intervals, the air seething, alive.

Contrast, as in the shots of the female spectators, one fired with

frenzy, the other mildly disgusted, is used to good effect; and while there is some concentration on types, many of the "extra" parts spring to life. The fat gourmand, for instance, is unmistakably news-reel. But the gangster's moll, with her fulsome charm and witlessness, her heavy ripe face, the nervous seconds, and the blind listener are aptly presented and portrayed.

Moving Study of Boxer

Outside, honky-tonk bar parlours take up some space, and, were they not photographed in so rich, so shimmering a pattern, would amply justify it. Arthur Edeson, of "The Maltese Falcon," has dealt better with this kind of thing in a number of films—notably "Nobody Lives Forever" (in itself quite unimportant).

Robert Ryan provides an intelligent portrait; though Wise seems afraid of pathos. There is much that is moving in both the boxer's triumph and his fall.

Audrey Trotter's laundry elegance is the only cool thing in the picture; however, miscasting is evident here, Alan Baxter (best remembered from "Saboteur") shows a talent for quiet pathology.

While success is not complete, Wise's talent and Ryan's deepen-

Lola Albright ("Palmer") models Kirk Douglas (Midge Kelly) in United Artists' "Champion."

ing strength are greatly felt. And confinement of space and time serve to sharpen the action.

Temporarily more diffuse, and fundamentally trite in its revelation of an individual who "stops at nothing," **Champion** achieves more through character-analysis (people doing, rather than "types" reacting) and the performance given by Kirk Douglas (Kelly).

Ring Lardner's story has been watered down but not emasculated; its electric verve and slick desiccation of character remain; and Mark Robson manipulates it with self-control, allowing no shimmer to obscure the boxer's pride and callousness.

Kelly, very casually using and disposing of three women, firing his manager, driving his mother to sickness and finally death, and then parting company with a loyal brother, is certainly without dignity or compassion.

His one-track personality is defined with ruthlessness, but, also, a hint of charm; among his victims, three of "The Window" performers, Ruth Roman, Paul Stewart and Arthur Kennedy, are sympathetic and sincere.

The sequences in the ring do not suffer very much by comparison with "The Set-Up" single one; but their cumulative effect is not so powerful, perhaps because of the lack of that very sentimentality which we had decried in the other film (it soon becomes a foregone conclusion that Kelly will win; because we feel nothing save hatred for him, his victories do not excite us).

The music shows once again Dimitri Tiomkin's talent as a film composer. And editing and photography are sharp and swift.

Force of Evil, probably the most considerable of the works under discussion, deals with the "Numbers Racket"—an illegal lottery prevalent (it would seem) in the United States. But the real theme is the struggle of two brothers to escape from the evil to which they have been respectively driven and attracted.

John Garfield and Thomas Gomez interpret this with performances that are profoundly felt and brilliant in execution.

The dialogue is poetic and evocative, and the background—the tenement buildings, offices, police-stations — etched with understanding; whereas "The "Set-Up" consists of a single magnificent sequence, and "Champion" contains several that are competent and little more, "Force of Evil" has moments when beauty and squalor rise to a supreme, blended pitch.

Garfield's speech in the night-club and his long descent down the harbour steps at the end are particularly to be noted. The music—too strident—is a weak point in this otherwise most interesting work.

Each of these films has a comparatively new director, and each has the virtues of freshness, warmth and verve. As long as Hollywood can produce men like Wise, Robson and "Force of Evil's" Abraham Polonsky, it has by no means breathed its last.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

GERMANY

From ANTHONY LODGE

VERY little has hitherto been published about the reviving German film industry. The little that is written deals mainly with the Russian-licensed, -financed and -dominated firm of Defa. Three films from this firm—the much-overrated *Die Morder Sind Unter Uns* (The Murderers Are Among Us); the moving, if technically uneven, *Ehe im Schatten* (Marriage in the Shadow); and *The Blum Affair*, exciting and authentic.

Yet the most interesting developments have been in the Western zones, where scores of new companies are springing into existence, with plenty of ideas and enthusiasm and very little finance. Up to the end of 1948, West German studios had completed 27 films, with 24 in preparation, and every week two or three new films are premiered in Hamburg or Berlin.

Hamburg—Film Capital

Hamburg shows every sign of becoming the new film capital of Germany; it has already become an important cultural and theatre centre. Well-equipped studios are already in being in a former barracks in Rahlstedt; and the Senate plans to vote a large sum to build a big film-city in Hamburg. Where floor-space is lacking, ingenuity and improvisation take its place. I saw three different units shooting on location within a few weeks in one suburban street.

Appropriately enough, the first modest beginnings were made in Hamburg, when, in the winter of 1946-7, Halmuth Käutner shot his *In Jenen Tagen* (In Those Days) in the open air with a salvaged camera. Probably the most promising director in Germany, Käutner followed this up with the highly experimental *Film Ohne Titel* (Film Without Title), shown recently at the Curzon Cinema, London.

Meanwhile, other improvised studios were making hesitant experiments; these betrayed the shaky technique and gloomy preoccupation with ruins and black market (for example, *Die Morder Sind Unter Uns*) to which irreverent journalists applied the term "Trümmerromantik." This formula was finally romanticised into slick box office, complete with happy ending, in the Objektiv film, *Und Uber Uns der Himmel* (The Sky Above Us), made in Berlin by the popular pre-war star, Hans Albers; it then died a natural death.

More Positive Approach

Gradually, a less pessimistic and more positive approach, backed with a surer technique born of improving equipment and studios, began to make itself felt. The C.C.C. film, *Morituri*, widely publicised as "a film addressed to the world," was the the first avowedly anti-Nazi film; it deals with a band of escaped prisoners from a concen-

tration camp in Poland, rather on the lines of *The Last Chance.* As a whole, it is uneven and unconvincing.

The most positive contribution to German production has been made by Real Film, also of Hamburg. Their *Finale* was an honest attempt to present the problem of the post-war generation, through a crippled pianist; concert sequences (synchronised by Gieseking) showed the traditional German ability in introducing serious music into films. But the most polished production from Hamburg so far is *Die Letzte Nacht* (The Last Night), made by Real in the Rahlstedt studios, with Sybille Schmitz. This is an interesting attempt to vindicate the German soldier, with a story, reminiscent of *Le Silence de la Mer,* of the love between a German officer and a Frenchwoman condemned to be shot for sabotage. The challenging theme and excellent photography should make it suitable for showing abroad. Real also produced the German episode of the international film, *Europe Smiles Again,* with Bonar Colleano.

Adam and Eve

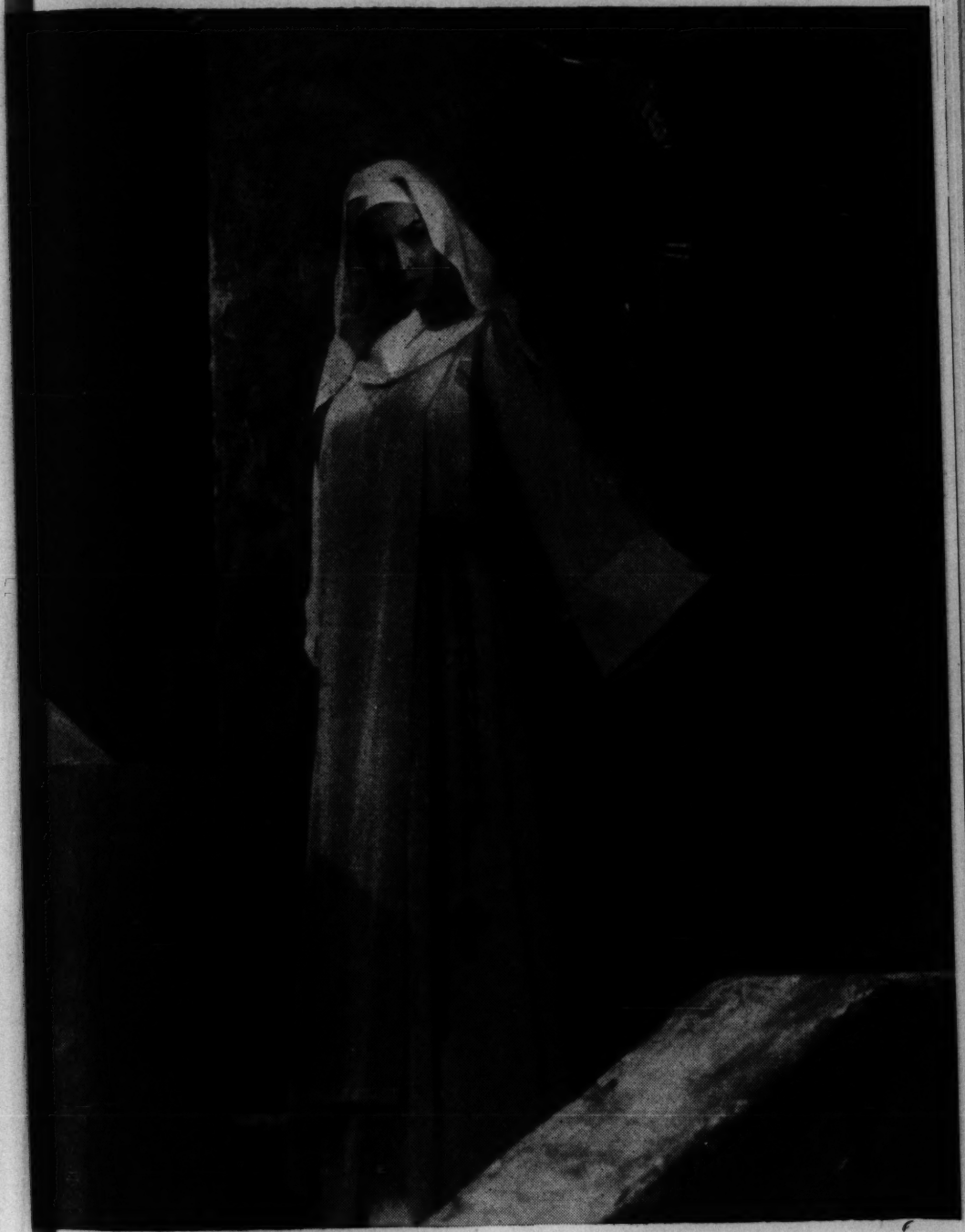
In the U.S. zone, the American authorities made a positive contribution to the revival of the industry by appointing Erich Pommer, former Ufa director and now American citzen, to supervise. The main result has been the reopening of Geiselgasteig, formerly the home of Bavaria Film, and the only pre-war studio in the Western zones of Germany. This has become the centre of production for more elaborate films, as well as for the synchronisation of English-speaking films with German dialogue.

A really outstanding film from Geiselgasteig is *Der Apfel Ist Ab,* another production of Helmuth Käutner, in which he also plays a leading part. It is a satirical fantasy on the Adam and Eve story, with elaborate surrealist sequences in a modernised paradise, with a cellophane-clad Eve and a night-club proprietor Lucifer.

Political Satire

Reports suggest that other interesting productions should come from this studio. *Lang Ist der Weg* is said to be a sincere study of the persecution of the Jews. *Der Ruf,* with Fritz Kortner, returned from U.S.A., deals with the problem of a German refugee professor returning to Germany. It has achieved much Press publicity, owing to the fact that the daughter of an American diplomat (Rosemary Murphy) plays a leading part. *Hallo, Fraulein* also has a German-American theme, with The American Way of Life being put across by jazz-bands.

Several of the Western film units have branches in the western sectors of Berlin, where a number of films has been made apart from those of the Russian-controlled Defa. Outstanding among these is Objektiv Film's production, *Berliner Ballade,* one of the few film comedies. It is a lightly humorous treatment of the fantastic political situation in Berlin, rather in the Sacha Guitry or René Clair manner, seen through the eyes of Otto Averageman, a returned prisoner of war. A high spot is a comic Four-Power conference, with ensuing deadlock and veto, filmed three times, each time faster.



Maria Felix in "La Monja Alferez."

Most Interesting Film

Apart from the big Hamburg, Munich and Berlin production centres there are numerous smaller groups in various provincial towns, including one or two in the French zone. The most promising of these is at Göttingen, where Film-Aufbau has opened a new studio in the old university town, in former aircraft hangars. Its most outstanding production, and the most interesting German film to date, is *Liebe 47*. Based on the play, *Draussen vorder Tür*, this is the story of a soldier returned from Russian captivity to find himself alone in the world. It contains the most candid picture of the German national mentality from Hitler until the present day. The technique is an interesting blend of documentary and bold montage sequences. The director is Wolfgang Liebeneiner.

The future development of the German industry is, like everything else, entirely dependent on Germany's political destiny. Nevertheless there is every sign that its products may be as challenging and worthy of study as those of the classic period in the twenties.

(For further information on the German film — see Michael Arthur's report on the Locarno Film Festival.)

MEXICO

From RAYMOND DEL CASTILLO

The British film-goer may be fortunate enough to see some of the better French or Italian films, but he is almost completely ignorant of the films from other non-English-speaking nations.

Only two very bad Argentine films have been shown in this country, although the success of Aldo Fabrizi's first Argentine film will possibly ensure it a showing here in Great Britain. This is the story of an Italian emigrant and his family, and has all the human warmth we have come to associate with the Italian cinema.

State Film Bank

In Mexico, too, there is a film industry that, paradoxically enough, flourishes in spite of financial difficulties, although most of the monetary worries of the Mexican film industry are taken care of by the State Film Bank, a gigantic government undertaking which stakes large sums in film production, not always successfully, however.

The most noticeable thing about Latin American film production is the intense rivalry between Mexico and Argentina, with now one and now the other leading in the battle for markets.

Spain, the most important producer until 1936, has only recently re-entered the field, but is still handicapped by political difficulties, although during the last six months a number of non-controversial Spanish films have been successful at the box-offices of Latin American countries, including Argentina and Mexico.

Mexico does not always see eye to eye with Argentina on relations with Spain; thousands of Republican Spaniards settled in Mexico after 1936.

The great studios in Mexico City (the huge Churubuscu Studios are more modern than

anything in Hollywood) have two great advantages—Latin America's most popular screen stars are Mexican, and the only outstanding director of Spanish-language films has never worked outside Mexico.

Popular Stars

Dolores del Rio and Maria Felix are the most popular feminine stars, although a beautiful young actress, Maria Elena Marques, has made rapid advances since John Steinbeck, the famous American novelist, saw her acting in a slapstick version of *Romeo and Juliet* and gave her the highly dramatic leading role in his own original screenplay, *The Pearl*, which he later adapted as a novel. Maria Elena Marques' co-star in this important bi-lingual film sponsored by an American company was Pedro Armendariz, the leading Mexican actor, currently giving one of his fine performances in the American film, *We Were Strangers*. Only Jorge Negrete, a popular singer who has starred in a number of *charro* or Mexican Westerns, has a greater following than Armendariz.

The general level of Mexican films, however, is very low, mainly because of the lack of good directors. Only a handful of them even rise to the mediocre.

Among the most important, however, are Gabriel Soria, who was trained in Hollywood and later made *Virgen Morena*, the best of the many Mexican religious films; Roberto Gavaldon, who has made one atrocious American film, *Adventures of Casanova*, and who is now working in Argentina; and the greatest of them all, Emilio Fernandez, known throughout Mexico as "el Indio," who is paid over £15,000 per film and is worth every penny of it, who always works as a team with the cameraman, Gabriel Figueroa, responsible for the highly praised photography of John Ford's *The Fugitive*.

"National" Film Director

Fernandez, whom the Argentinians are attempting to lure with fabulous salaries, is the only Spanish-speaking director whose work is instantly recognisable for any individual style, and he is also the only truly "national" film director in a series of intensely nationalistic film industries.

Only one of his films, and that not his best, has ever been shown publicly in this country; but *Portrait of Maria* did give some idea of the vitality of the Mexican film industry, whereas *Albeniz* and *Jealousy*, the Hollywood-type Argentinian "epics," were by no means representative of the best in the Argentine cinema.

Stars as Creditors!

This tug-of-war between two rival industries is somewhat similar to the ever-present struggle between Britain and Hollywood, although in South America the two antagonists are about evenly matched.

However, Argentina is about to bring her big guns into play and sign up well-known Americans stars such as George Sanders and Louis Hayward. This despite a somewhat sordid recent incident when one of the leading Argentinian production companies ran out of money; it had been financed by the biggest local gambling concession until that concern was nationalised. There was an unseemly scramble as popular stars and well-known directors rushed to obtain legal control of

Italian actress Carla del Poggio.

their very latest pictures, thereby hoping to recompense themselves for the salaries which were owing.

All this makes it a little difficult to believe stories, reprinted in the British Press, that Argentine studios are trying to sign Vivien Leigh.

Films For Europe

Mexico has recently lost some of its most important stars to Argentina. Arturo de Cordoba is being paid £12,500 for every film he makes in that country, but Dolores del Rio was so disappointed with the way she was photographed in her first Argentinian film, a version of Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*, that she refused to make any more films in Buenos Aires.

Maria Felix, after her recent visit to Europe, during which she spent some time in Britain, has been in Buenos Aires seeing whether she, too, should desert her home studios. However, at the present moment, the production scene in Mexico is much brighter than in Argentina and it is likely that she also will return to her home ground.

The Mexican producers are not allowing any grass to grow under their feet in this struggle. Recently the five biggest producers got together and decided to pool their distribution facilities outside Mexico, and they opened a European office in Paris which has arranged distribution in France and Italy for a number of the better Mexican films.

And it is quite likely that before long the British cinemagoer will have a chance to see for himself the better type of Mexican film.

SWITZERLAND

From MICHAEL ARTHUR

For the fourth time, many hundreds of film journalists and people of the film world came to Locarno for the ten-day film festival, which this year has made more of an impression in international film circles than did its predecessors; this time there was an independent jury of Swiss film critics to judge the films.

The general background of the festival has remained the same as in previous years—each morning and afternoon there were performances for the Press, and each evening two films were shown in the beautiful open-air theatre. Some of these films were shown for the first time in Europe, a few had their world premières.

At the beginning of each performance the flag of the competing nation was hoisted in Locarno, and the respective national anthem was played. We rather deplored this. Surely the film should attempt to unite the nations rather than to excite and further nationalism. The country of the film's origin is, after all, of less importance than its artistic and human content.

The innumerable well-known guests in Locarno included the American producer, Hal Wallis; the Italian directors, Vittorio de Sica and Alberto Lattuadua; the French film actor, Georges Rollin, and his compatriot, Marcel Blistène; the well-known directors, Wolfgang Liebeneiner and G. W. Pabst from Germany; the lovely Italian film actress, Carla del Poggio; the very charming Hilde Krahl from Germany; and, above

all, Jean Simmons, who bewitched the Swiss people with her very real and childlike charm.

Before we begin to speak of the different films shown in Locarno, we would like to emphasise that these films are not necessarily the best and the most representative of the various nations taking part in this event, as the various countries also had to submit their films for the festivals of Venice and Cannes.

ITALY was represented by two films, of which one had its world première in Locarno, "Il Mulino del Po," which concerns itself with the social tension among the Italian country people of the last century; despite its wonderful photography it leaves no positive impression behind. It is far too long-winded, without unity, and altogether too literary. The other Italian film, de Sica's "Ladri di Biciclette," on the other hand, was one of the highlights of the festival. A simple, lifelike and human story is told here in such a way that it can be called a masterpiece of psychology.

BRITISH films were represented by "Adam and Evelyne," "Quartet" and "Silent Dust." "Adam and Evelyne" owes success to its pleasing charm and its clear technique, and, of course, to Jean Simmons. "Quartet" succeeded in keeping the essential poetry of Somerset Maugham and showed clear handling and subtle art. In contrast to these films, "Silent Dust," although it may be considered quite good entertainment, seemed rather too trivial.

SWEDISH films "Tösen fran Stoemytorpet" and "Hamnstad" are typical products of the Swedish film industry, with their unfamiliar Swedish setting (the seemingly inevitable adultery, illegitimate children, prostitution), their heavy treatment of the subject, but also their brilliant photography.

The **RUSSIAN** documentary, "Sowjetukraine," describes the work being done in Russian reconstruction and planned economy; but, unfortunately, the good filming is spoilt by the narrow-minded nationalism and exaggerated propaganda of the dialogue, which appears ludicrous to an intelligent public.

The **BELGIAN** travel film, "L'Equateur aux Cinq Visages," was poorly photographed, and that is surely the worst that one can expect from a film of this type.

The **UNITED STATES** sent no less than seven films to Locarno, most of which were new only to the Continent of Europe. The animal film, "Bill and Coo," which tells of the love story of two badgers, was disappointing because all that is natural and sincere was lost in cheap sentiment.

Although "Sorry, Wrong Number" is a remarkable thriller, particularly owing to the excellent dramatic performance of Barbara Stanwyck, it loses through its submission to the demands of the general public. The artistic handling has suffered from this treatment, and instead of a coherent film, one is left with a picture which has not yet emerged completely from the medium of the radio play.

"Yellow Sky," although related in subject matter to "The Treasure of Sierra Madre," is not nearly its equal so far as quality is concerned. Lubitsch's parting gift, "That Lady in Ermine," though it shows little of the charm, the slightly ironic

humour, or the originality of the earlier Lubitsch films, is still well above average in entertainment value.

"Enchantment" achieved the greatest success with the audience of Locarno, even though its sentimentality was rather heavily exaggerated. There is some good animal photography in "The Big Cat," but the handling of the film is rather too simple.

"He Walked by Night" had considerable success. This is much more than an ordinary criminal film concerning the dispatch of a murderer. Every detail is interesting; the eerie atmosphere of restlessness and pursuit is shown in a truly filmic manner, making this the most ambitious of the American pictures shown.

From **GERMANY** there were three new films. "Das Verlorene Gesicht" is made clumsily, and appears to be an attempt to follow blindly the American trend to use psycho-analysis. "Die Zeit mit Dir," in which the handling is rather uninteresting, is clearer and more coherent in its construction, and is a very unpretentious little film.

The most widely discussed film of the festival was "Liebe 47" which, with its lacerated and tortured style, paints a very moving picture of Germany in the post-war years. But it can only really be understood by those who have seen and experienced these events. The people—in Locarno, obviously a large majority—who have not had this experience, can find only little to please them in this tormented, unconventional and much-too-talkative picture.

AUSTRIA was represented by a film that will lower the already weak prestige of Austrian film production. "Duell Mit dem Tod" purports to show the Austrian underground movement in such a way, that one is almost led to believe that 99 per cent. of all Germans and Austrians were opposed to the Nazi régime.

FRANCE sent two weak and two good films. "Le Sorcier du Ciel" is insignificant from a technical point of view and gives an exaggerated description of the fight of a clergyman against ungodliness. It cannot in any way be compared with its great predecessor, "Monsieur Vincent", that deep understanding of human nature is here replaced by clerical intolerance and religious absolutism. "Mission à Tanger" was probably the weakest of all the films shown in Locarno. "Pattes Blanches" is composed of beautifully-portrayed images and settings, artistically edited. "La Ferme des Sept Peches" deals with a crime committed a 125 years ago, when the life of the poet Courier was sacrificed. This film shows very clearly that fanaticism is a most bitter enemy of the human race.

The jury did not wish to reward only technical achievement and box-office entertainment, but also artistic ideas expressed in the medium of the cinema. For this reason, "La Ferme des Sept Peches," with its poetic qualities and symbolic significance, was awarded the Grand Prix of Locarno.

The prize for the film with the best treatment of a present-day problem, was given to the Italian "Ladri di Biciclette." The American "He Walked by Night" gained the prize for the best criminal film. The English film, "Adam and Evelyne," was deemed the best in entertainment. "Pattes Blanches" ob-

(*Continued on page* 43)

The Freedom of the Screen

by R. E. WHITEHALL

Films that stimulate intelligent thought are senselessly censored. Yet what is tantamount to encouragement is given to pernicious rubbish like "Maytime in Mayfair."

THE storm of controversy surrounding the opening of "The Snake Pit" has done its job; the film is one of the biggest current successes. But the question arises as to whether the ten minutes snipped out of the film are justified—the critics who saw both the original and the censored version appear to be of a mind that such cutting was unnecessary.

While this storm was stirring the troubled waters of film criticism, an objectionable little comedy, "Miss Tatlock's Millions," crept by without a murmur of disapproval, although it made fun of insanity, as did the earlier William Powell-Myrna Loy "Love Crazy."

Apparently, there is no harm in touching on a controversial subject so long as no attempt is made to stimulate the thought-processes of the cinema-goer.

"Frenzy"—Immoral

Once more the whole troubled question of film censorship comes up. It reached its peak with "No Orchids for Miss Blandish" (yet that brilliant Swedish film, "Frenzy," was morally far more objectionable than the fake Americanisms of the sad British epic, which toured up and down the country in its stage version without raising a whimper of protest). Previously, the censors had removed a nightmare delirium tremens sequence from "The Lost Weekend."

On Religion

Then there was the scissoring of "Le Diable au Corps," leaving but a pale shadow of the delicately-handled original; the complete ban on Anna Magnani's "Il Bandito"; and the Swedish version of "Crime and Punishment."

The case for the latter film shows the censorial demand for the bowdlerisation of a book obtainable by any schoolchild who wants to read it. Because the Swedish producers were blunt about one of the characters and neither disguised her as a "dance-hall girl" nor left her out altogether, the film may not be seen in this country.

"Ordet," a brilliant Swedish film dealing with religious mania, is barred because it may offend religious susceptibilities. The censor always deletes the Lord's Prayer for the same reason.

"Maytime in Mayfair"

Is the censor, then, out to stop all serious discussion upon the screen? And is he attempting to take care of the morals of the nation by providing cinema-goers with nothing stronger than a "Maytime in Mayfair"? This particular picture, incidentally, provides such an unutterably false view of life that it is fairly certain it will, eventually, do more harm than a film like "Le Diable au Corps."

Strictly Pictorial

Susan Hayward

Director Thornton Freeland

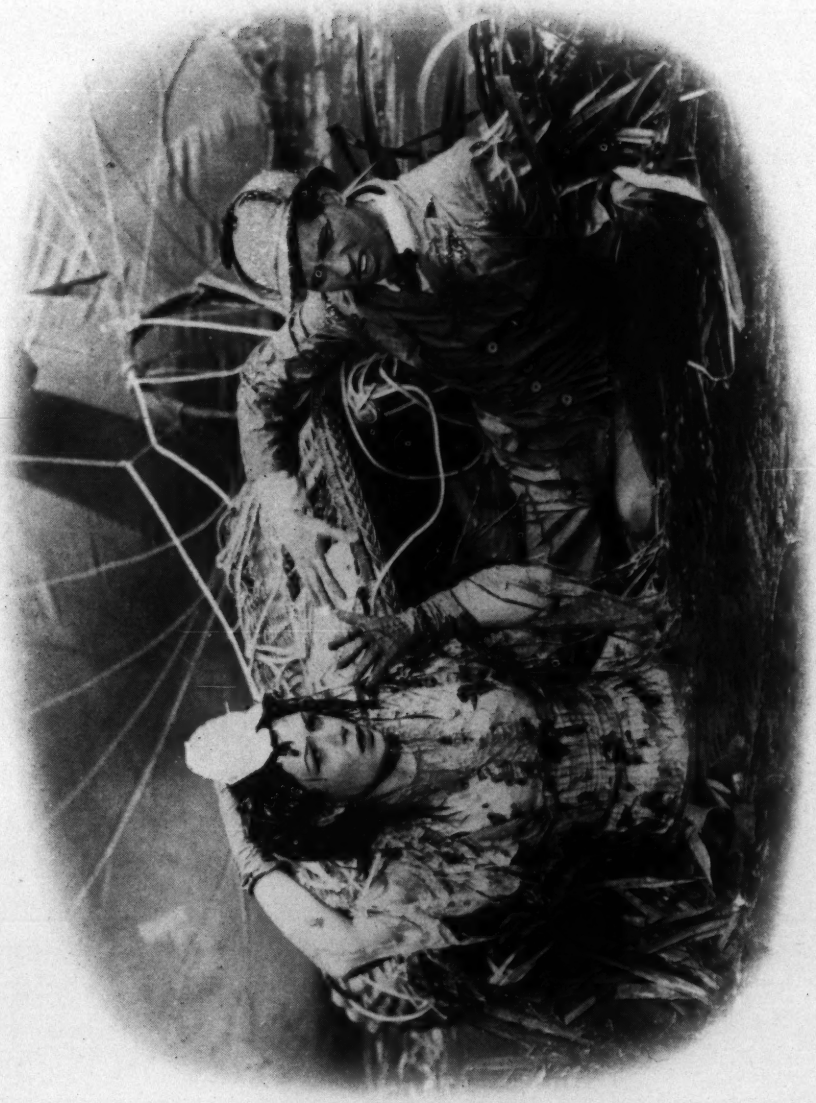
DEAR Mr. PROHACK

Bureaucrat Arthur Prohack (Cecil Parker), left; and Glynis Johns and Dirk Bogarde, who provide the romantic interest.

Edward Dmytryk directing Sally

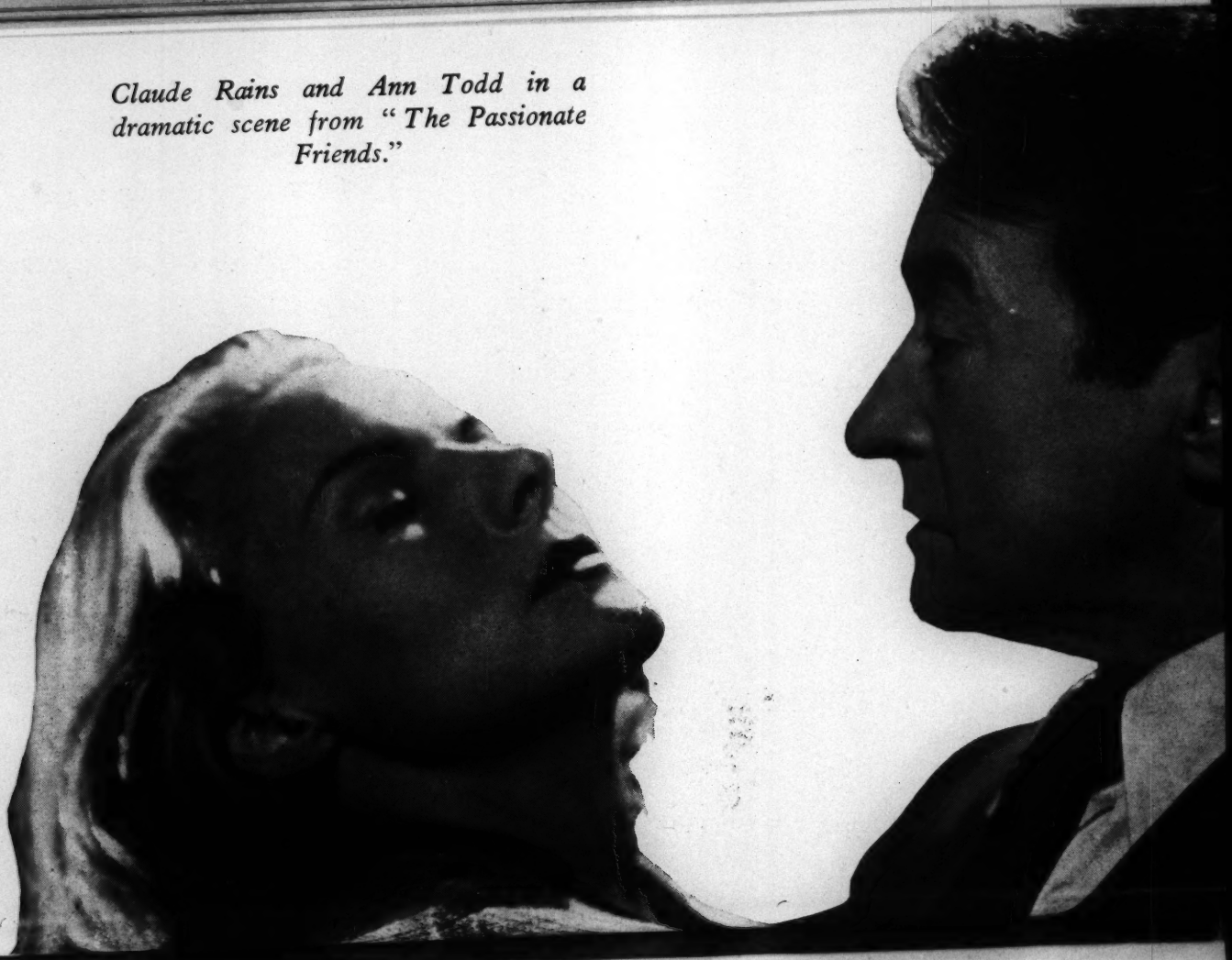
g Sally ... during the filming of "Obsession."

"TROTTIE TRUE"



Balloonist Andrew Crawford and Gaiety Girl Jean Kent (Trottie True) make a forced landing.

Claude Rains and Ann Todd in a dramatic scene from "The Passionate Friends."



We have come a long way since those days in 1909 when a film version of "Julius Cæsar" was condemned because the shortness of Cæsar's tunic was immoral; but have we come far enough?

The motion picture, as long ago as 1915, was referred to as the "Fifth Estate," yet the millstone of censorship is allowed to hang around the neck of the film in a way not demanded of the "Fourth Estate" of the Press.

Rights of Man

Is a censorship body necessary at all? The question can be argued to a standstill, but Hollywood has, during the last few years, shown a public responsibility and a growing awareness of its own potentiality for good. As Doré Schary once remarked, "Hollywood is no longer in the nickleodeon stage, only some of its critics."

Hollywood is tackling contemporary problems that have hitherto been left to the Press. There is a growing demand in America to get a definite ruling on the limits of free speech allowed the motion picture. And a number of rulings by the censorship board—which exists in only seven states—are being contested in the courts.

The line between informing and entertaining has now been drawn tight as a thread; and Hollywood is beginning to ask why the inalienable right of free speech is not allowed to American films.

Public Opinion Best

Now there is little doubt that this abolition of censorship would pave the way for abuses by the more disreputable producers on the lunatic fringe of film production. But surely the unofficial censorship of public opinion is the most potent of all As recently as last June a re-issue of "Birth of a Nation" was withdrawn from an American cinema after over 100 people had protested at its anti-Negro stand; and the producer of "No Orchids" has gone on record as regretting the film.

The Press in this country is liable to severe penalties for overstepping the bounds of good taste; and most of the big film corporations would be as severe on their degenerates as any Press-lord.

One American company even stopped making the profitable "Tarzan" films because they were "not commensurate with the reputation of the producers."

What of Censors' Morals?

But what of the morals of an immature audience who might find themselves corrupted by salacious films? Some years ago a Dr. Frank Astor conducted an investigation into films allegedly responsible for juvenile delinquency; he found, after examining a number of youths who had blamed particular films for their lapse from grace, that only a small proportion had actually seen the films they quoted.

Not all the censors in Oxford Street can make a film pure for every one who will see it. For the apple of temptation will always be omnipresent, however modern the Adam and his Eve.

Finally the question comes up as to whether censorship is based on experience. In other words, are certain films banned because they were found to be corrupting the morals of the British Board of Film Censors? Or have the censors reached such an age of discretion that they are now incorruptible?

by Brian Robins

"Film Monthly Review" Studio Reporter

AUTUMN production prospects for the British studios are more uncertain this year than at any time since the beginning of the second world war.

Although there are now twenty-three pictures in production in this country, no more than nine of the thirty British studios are working; the remainder of the films are being shot in part or completely on locations here or overseas.

All the largest plants, with six or more stages, are working far below capacity. Denham has been operating on three stages, Pinewood on three, Shepperton on one, and the huge new M.G.M. studios at Boreham Wood have been out of action for seven months.

On Location

The unusually thriving state of location work became most noticeable during the annual summer holiday shutdown in the five Associated British, Rank Organisation and Teddington Studios, when ten films were due for a rest for the holiday. But, in fact, work continued without a break on four because they were in production far outside the shuttered stages.

Although about fifty per cent. of these pictures will not be finished on location, the autumn programme is not extensive enough to keep our studios working as efficiently as they are at the moment.

Government Aid

Five of the films in front of the cameras are supported by grants from the National Film Finance Corporation; and it is clear that this type of subsidy for British production is a vital, stabilising influence at a time when commercial interests in the City are almost hostile towards both group and independent producers who seek financial backing.

James Lawrie, managing-director of the Finance Corporation, intimated recently that the Board of Trade might be asked, at the end of the Corporation's financial year, to increase its £5,000,000 annual grant for backing British production.

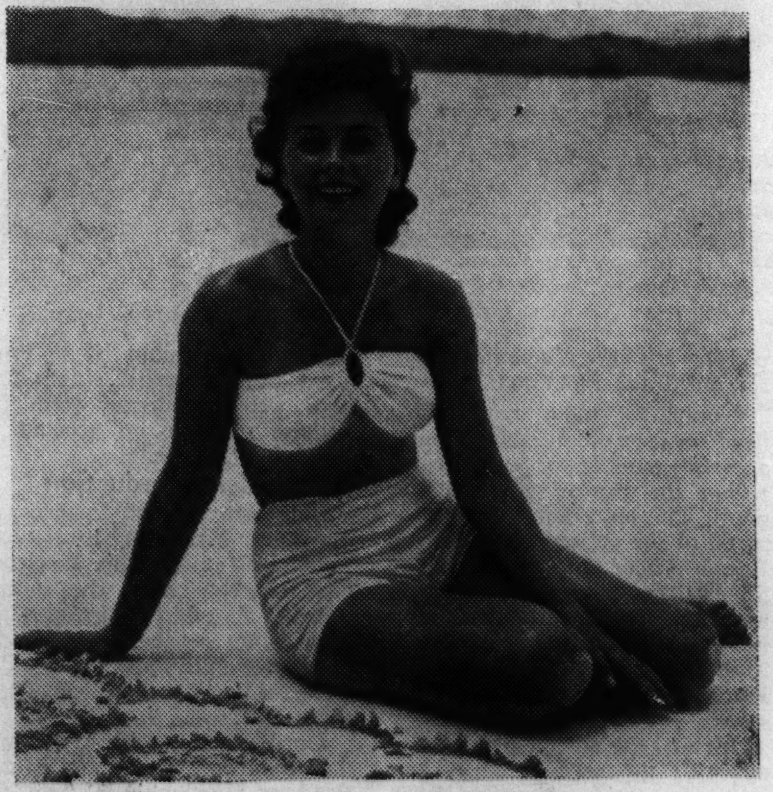
Many producers have taken this to imply that there has already been an exhaustive drain on the Corporation's funds—with eight months to go before further resources become available.

If this is so, it will mean a sharp decline in the production rate. It may be one of the factors behind the dismal booking position in our studios for the next few months.

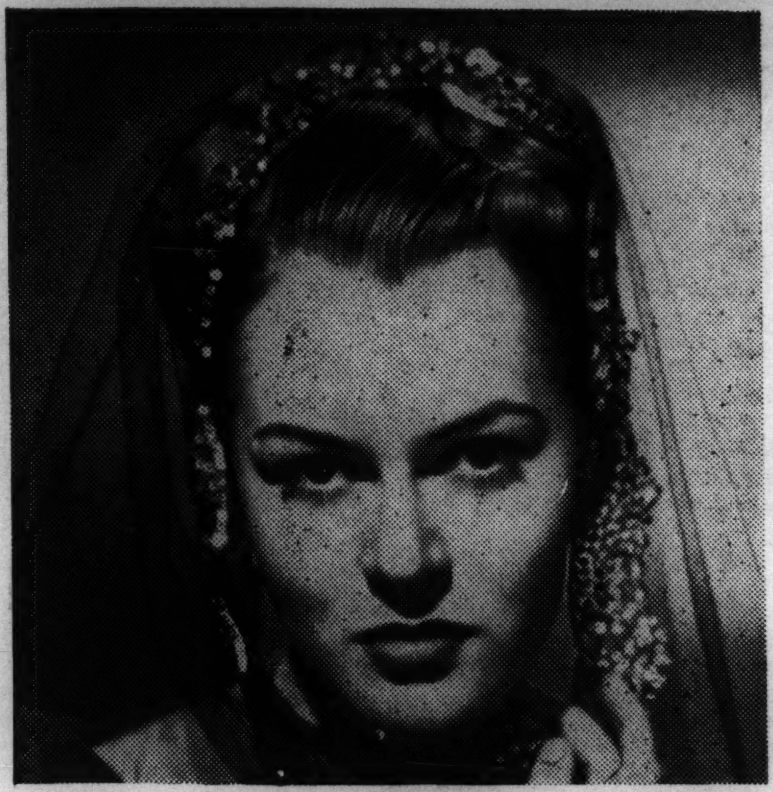
Empty Pinewood?

At the Pinewood plant, for instance, there were four major subjects in production before the holiday interval: David Lean's Madeleine"; the new Noel Coward play adaptation, "The Astonished Heart"; Jean Simmons' latest starring vehicle, "So Long at the Fair"; and Ronald Neame's Tunisian film, "The Golden Salamander."

With the exception of the Jean Simmons' picture, all the films are due for completion within the next few days. Yet not one new



Jean Simmons



Carol Marsh

picture has been announced as scheduled for Pinewood.

Normally, studio rentals are fixed between producers and management months, or even years, before the picture goes on the floor. This uncertainty is symtomatic of the general confusion of British production, suffering from financial penury, on the one hand, and the insistent demands for higher output from renters and exhibitors—with a 45 per cent. British quota to maintain—on the other.

It was thought a few weeks ago that two new subjects—one about the seaside, the other about safebreaking—would save Pinewood from a partial slump, but both were withdrawn from the autumn schedule on account of " story difficulties."

Independent Production

Coincident with further redundancy notices to studio technicians at Denham, Pinewood and Riverside came the sudden news of a revival in independent British film production. This development will affect work at Denham more than anywhere else.

Until the first week of August, the production output at Denham stood at four subjects from the

Rank Organisation and three from independent producers. Only two more Rank films are scheduled for the autumn and five are due to be made by independents.

Writer-director Jeffrey Dell is to take a unit to Germany soon to gather background material for the new Rank film, "The Hoffman Case." Eric Portman may star. Its companion film for Rank is the new Jean Kent picture, "The Reluctant Widow," which Gordon Wellesley will produce.

Dmytryk Returns Shortly

Editing technicians at Denham recently set up a new production record for British studios when they cut and scored the two-hour Rod Geiger-Edward Dmytryk-Nat Bronsten production, "Give Us This Day"—in twelve working days. This is less than a quarter of the time normally required for handling a film of this size and importance, after work is complete on the studio floor.

Edward Dmytryk, one of the world's most talented and original film technicians—banned from working in Hollywood last year by the anti-Communist Committee of un-American Activities—is due to return to Britain during late autumn to make more films here. Meanwhile his British efforts, "Obsession" (Robert Newton, Sally Gray), and "Give Us This Day" (Sam Wanamaker. Lea Padovani), have been praised by studio executives as ideal examples of the best in current British studio practice and technical achievement.

Film of the Play

Alexander Korda's London Films have sent units to Italy for Sidney Gilliat's "State Secret," and to Shropshire for the David Farrar-Jennifer Jones Technicolor picture, "Gone to Earth."

This group's studio schedule is still indefinite during the coming months. Frank Launder is at present making a screen version of the play, "The Happiest Days of Your Life" (6-week schedule), at London Films' Isleworth Studios, while Shepperton is busy with the Twentieth Century-Fox film "Night and the City" (Richard Widmark).

Ealing Studios will follow its Scotland Yard story, "The Blue Lamp," with director Charles Crichton's "Dance Hall" in October. Carol Marsh is expected to play the leading part.

Australia and Germany

Meanwhile in Australia, plans are going ahead to launch another Ealing Studios' project there. This time it is the life story of the concert pianist, Eileen Joyce, titled "Prelude." Michael Gordon will produce.

The American producer, Rod Geiger, recently went into partnership with actor Bonar Colleano, and the pair have a four-film programme due to begin in October. Three will be about the contemporary scene in Germany, the other is about the Italian astronomer, Galileo.

FILM STARS

5 different large photos, P.O. 1s. 3d.; 10 different 2s. 6d. Pritchard's (Booksellers Dept.), 672 Coventry Road, Birmingham 10.

Record Review

by John Huntley

Once a film has left our local cinema, it is often very difficult to recall the mood and atmosphere of a picture we particularly enjoyed seeing. Photographs in our magazines do help a little; and so does the plot of a picture, told in story form.

There are a few films for which gramophone records are available; and this is perhaps one of the most realistic and lively ways of recalling pictures to mind. With a small library of film recordings, it is possible to recapture some of the atmosphere of Laurence Olivier's speeches in "**Henry V**" and "**Hamlet,**" the scenic grandeur of "**Scott of the Antarctic,**" or the thrills of Gene Kelly's "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" ballet from "**Words and Music.**"

Let us consider the last-mentioned item, for example. The ballet was undoubtedly the high-spot of this film and several recordings exist of this Rodgers work. There is an original recording by **Paul Whiteman** on **H.M.V.**, for this ballet was first heard before the war and seen in the film "**On Your Toes,**" featuring Vera Zorina. **Sidney Torch and his Orchestra** have recently recorded it on **Parlophone R.3203**; but for sheer vitality and drive, I find it difficult to beat the recording made by the **M.G.M. Studio Orchestra** conducted by **Lennie Hayton** on **M.G.M.165**. The actual recording quality is outstanding, with some remarkable percussive effects and a fine reverberative feeling on some sections of the brass scoring.

Walt Disney enthusiasts have always been well served on records. From his film, "**Melody Time,**" the item on "Little Toot" is available on **Capitol CL.13119**, recorded by **Don Wilson**, with **The Starlighters.** But I would recommend a disc by **Roberto Inglez and his Orchestra**, playing P. J. Smith's Samba, "The Armadillo," taken from one of the Disney short film "**Pluto and the Armadillo.**" The peculiar walk of the little animal is portrayed by a figure in the bass of the piano; if you enjoy recalling Disney, you should get **Parlophone R.3206.**

The film, "**The Passionate Friends,**" has already been covered by a 12-inch symphonic recording of Richard Addinsell's background music (**Columbia DX.1557**). **Decca F.9181**, however, carries a subtle and fascinating performance of a haunting dance tune from the film, and is labelled "Lover's Moon."

The Huggett series usually has a song or two by Petula Clark, and you can get a souvenir of this film family on **Columbia DB. 2538.** The song "House in the Sky" is taken from "**The Huggetts Abroad**" and is a fair sample of the style of series.

Suggestions for those starting a film-record library:—

The three records of the famous music from "**Things To Come**" by Athur Bliss are still available on **Decca K.810, 811 and 817.** This set includes the "Ballet for Children," a musical sketch, "The World in Ruins," an Epilogue with full choral ending, and the familiar March.

FILM REVIEWS

THE THIRD MAN

The Fallen Idol established Graham Greene and Carol Reed as Britain's premier writer-director combination. It's only natural that they should follow up their first parable of sin with a supercharged excursion into the decay, corruption, deceit and death that we're all heir to.

Instead of two and a half stars we have four now (or five, including the City of Vienna). Not one producer, but two, Messrs. Selznick and Korda. And instead of playing out a simple theme of original sin, there's a basinful of lesser afflictions tossed in for good luck.

Unfortunately, however, instead of a parable, this film has turned into a parabola.

It rumbles, ambles, pulls up short of its destination, turns the corner and jogs pleasantly enough into a further morass of human folly. What punch and tension there is comes from the editor and cameraman (both Austrian, incidentally).

All the actors skid across the transcendental pitfalls of the script. But, with the exception of Joseph Cotten, there isn't a great deal they can do to lift the plot out of the sewer. That sewer is the high-lit climax of the film.

A smooth, soft-spoken American writer comes to Vienna at the invitation of his friend. But the friend was buried ten minutes before the train pulls in. "Good riddance—he was a notorious black-marketeer," say the police. "Hooey," replies the writer. "Best buddy I ever had."

So now there's conflict. The writer must get to the bottom of this. He must stalk across the most baroque of all the houses in Vienna. He must slash this story wide open.

In the course of his inquiries he meets Fraulein Schmidt, a bit-part actress. She loved the lamented friend beyond death, swindle and redemption. Although Fraulein Schmidt confuses the friend and the writer at several points in the drama, and although the writer, on his part, has no objection at being thus supplanted, erotic complications don't count when it's a matter of Justice.

Justice must be done; and in this case Justice is all botched up and covered up in confusion. There's Trevor Howard, the British Police Chief, persisting with his "good riddance" story. There's Joseph Cotten rummaging round. There's the friend who isn't dead a bit, but spends his time between the fun fairs and suburbia. He is, in fact, *The Third Man.*

Once Trevor Howard convinces the amateurish Mr. Cotten that his life-long pal was a crook of the first water, Justice is delivered from her trouble. Howard and Cotten team up to hound out his wickedness, *The Third Man.*

How about Fraulein Schmidt? Let this be said in favour of *The Third Man*—it doesn't give you a tidy love story. Fraulein Schmidt's unredeemed love won't be a party to Mr. Cotten's "stool-

pigeoning," even though her refusal might mean her own personal persecution by the Russians, throwing Mr. Cotten to the winds, and a wrench to the audience. Love is definitely not triumphant in this film.

All the Viennese in the film are old, war-damaged and incapable of coping with the Occupation Forces. Here again the film scores: the language problem affords added interest, instead of distracting the audience from the onrush of incidents. The music played exclusively on a zither is a model of restraint. It should be dinned into Max Steiner, music chief of Warner Bros, night and day with a midnight matinee.

The political fuses, scattered among these social fag-ends in Vienna, aren't fired off. That would be asking for trouble at the box office!

If you like your entertainment to be peppered with clever bits of cinematography, *The Third Man* is a winner. But, if you are of the opinion that emotional undercurrent and drama should have balance—well, I'm afraid you'll have to take some ultra-realistic shots of the Viennese sewers as second best.

ERIC GOLDSCHMIDT

TOMORROW'S A WONDERFUL DAY

In 1924, Ben Shemen, the location of *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day,* was a small orphanage. Today it is Israel's foremost children's village.

From somewhere in Europe, a refugee boy arrives with the latest children's transport. His life has been covered with tragedy, and the film depicts the struggle he undergoes on the road back to normalcy.

His mind draws an analogy between the make-up of the village settlement and the concentration camp. The sight of barefooted children suggests to him that here, too, shoes are taken away in order to prevent escape.

Barbed wire enclosing fields project a similar image of horror on his mind. But gradually he shatters the wall he has built around himself, emerges from the ruins and slowly, step by step, accepts his new life.

The children of Ben Shemen are the only actors in this film. In spite of some sentimental lapses and a few weak spots in the script, the picture tells its story well throughout, at times brilliantly. Directed by Helmar Lerski and produced by the Children's Village of Ben Shemen, Israel.

R.N.

TRAIN OF EVENT

This film is, in fact, a misnomer; there is no common link between the four episodes presented.

Here is a cinematic pie which shows the mark of too many fingers; hence the general confusion of the script, and the consequent breakdown in the film as a whole.

But taken as four separate episodes, the picture has many merits. The most skilfully-handled story is that of the actor and his wayward wife, beautifully played by Peter Finch and Mary Morris.

Basil Dearden is responsible for this episode. Unfortunately, however, he is not so successful in his direction of the story of the German prisoner-of-war.

Another piece, about a famous conductor, involves some biting burlesque from Valerie

(*Continued on page* 39)

HOW TO SCRIPT

By Oswell Blakeston
(Focal Press, 6s.)

Although this Focal Cinebook modestly claims to teach us how to script amateur films only, many professional British screenwriters—judging from the poor-quality scripts used for the majority of our films—would derive considerable benefit from a close study of it.

The writing, the illustrations (by John Halas) and the general lay-out are models of clarity.

Foreword by Paul Rotha.

Copies of "How To Script" should be placed at regular intervals along the bar counter in the Screenwriters' Club.

HOW TO DIRECT

By Tony Rose
(Focal Press, 6s.)

Another excellent Focal Cinebook for the amateur. In his foreword, Roy Boulting says:

"The Film Society movement has made astounding progress over the last few years. All over the country, groups of people are extracting great fun and the most satisfying pleasure from the making of films.

"Beyond the fun, however, is a developing sense and appreciation of what the film is and can be as a creative medium. People who themselves make films go to the cinema in a state of greater critical awareness. I believe such a state to be beneficial to the development of all films in general and British films in particular.

"I look forward hopefully to the day when the influence of a serious, constructive cinema-going public will rival the power possessed by those sad thousands whose hysterical demonstrations and pathetic little notes to their favourite stars are accepted by the captains of our industry as valid barometers of public opinion."

Here again, the prose style, John Halas' drawings and the bold lay-out are all highly objective.

FRIESE-GREENE

By Ray Allister
(Marsland Publications, 12s. 6d.)

Sixty years ago, when cinema was but a mere dream, William Friese-Greene, "the Father of Kinematography," invented the first practical cinema camera.

But for thirty years he was denied recognition; it was given to him five minutes before his death.

Besides being a very interesting history of the beginnings of cinema, Ray Allister's account of this inventive genius's struggles provides one of the most moving books I have ever read. Within its 200 pages, "Friese-Greene" probably contains more genuine feeling than all the so-called novels published in Britain during the past year.

(Continued on page 41)

Reports on two speeches given at the Third Annual Film School of the National Film Association

THE WRITER'S PLACE IN FILM MAKING

by MAXWELL MUNDEN

Seventeen years ago, Mr. Munden, at the age of 20, entered on his career as a journalist. Since then he has had a wide and varied experience in journalism and as a short-story writer and publicist. Turning his attention to films, he was appointed screen-writer at Merton Park studios in 1938; scenario editor of Verity Films, Ltd., in 1941; and he was associate producer of that firm when it became affiliated to the Film Producers' Guild in 1944 to form the Horizon Film Unit. Since 1947 he has been managing director of Film Workshop, Ltd., London.

AT the present time perhaps 75 per cent. of stories appearing on our cinema screens were not originally written for film production. In some cases, this does not always make for success, because the value of a story can be considerably altered by its transformation into pictures.

The author uses words to evoke the image. In the film, dialogue, for example, may be substituted by action. You may be able to get a required emphasis or effect by a close-up of an expression, gesticulation, etc., which makes words unnecessary.

Knowledge of Technicalities

The fact is, of course, that writing for the film, and writing for publication, are two very different jobs. But sometimes a successful author's work is bought for filming. He may be asked to prepare from his original book a "treatment" script.

In this he will have to present his story as, more or less, a description of the scenes, the action of the characters, and dialogue adapted to the facilities for expression offered by the technique of the film.

From this treatment will be prepared a shooting script from which the film director will work. To write this script necessitates a thorough knowledge of the technicalities of production.

In my view it is probable that the specialist writers for the film eventually will be integrated in the film-making team.

Four Movements in Film

The film author must ever keep in mind that the film has four movements: (a) movement of the characters, (b) the camera, (c) the film through the projector, and (d) the movement created by editing the film to different lengths or sequences.

As I have already implied, you can also change the emphasis—which is a kind of movement in itself—by the close-up.

If, for instance, on the stage you wanted to portray a harassed

man waiting for bad news, he would probably walk up and down tugging at his collar. On the screen the same incident might be portrayed merely by the close-up of a nervous hand tapping on a table.

Because of this intimacy, the writer has to understand how to handle close-up effects with the greatest delicacy. Amateur writers, as a rule, use the close-up far too often. They should remember that the close-up is, in effect, a method of punctuating a story.

Nowadays playwrights are finding it difficult to handle love scenes on the stage. Audiences are getting used to love scenes on the screen.

On the stage, the words in a love scene must be spoken aloud, and there must be no movement. On the screen, even the most passionate scene can be done by a look on a face or a gleam in the eye, without a word.

These possibilities for intimate treatment make the simple theme most successful for the screen. Involved plots, more than anything else, have held back the making of good films.

The film possibilities of a simple theme are well demonstrated by *The Window*. We see a small boy in a New York tenement. He is known to be a great romancer. Nobody believes anything he says.

One night he sleeps out, and sees a murder actually committed. In the morning he tells his mother what he has seen. She disbelieves him. He tells the police. They find no trace of the murder.

The mother goes away, leaving the boy alone. The couple who committed the crime try to capture him. At last the truth comes out. That's all.

This remarkable film achieves its powerful dramatic effect by the very simplicity of its plot, because the screen time can be devoted to character, mood, and tension.

In preparing a shooting script from a written story it is a great advantage if the same writer can do both. For a script written by any person except the original author tends to become cold and impassive.

This is partly due to the fact that as long as twelve months may elapse betwen the creation of an idea for a film and its appearance on the screen. In the mind of the technical man the story may become stale.

On the other hand, the author should be re-creating the life of his story in the shooting script every time it is read by the director or cameraman.

One of the writer's values is his sense of shape. He knows when to start and finish, and balance climaxes. That should make him valuable in films, apart from his skill with words.

Writing for documentaries often uses the writer's words more literally than in feature film scripting. For a spoken commentary is frequently used as it is less costly than taking actors on location. Also it will probably be necessary to translate the sound track into different languages.

Incidentally, the use of commentary in features is becoming more common, not only because it reduces the costs of production, but also because the use of narrative can dramatise, tauten, and change the perspectives of film story-telling.

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE YOUNG WRITERS A CHANCE TO LEARN

says BRIAN DESMOND HURST

Mr. Hurst is one of Britain's leading film directors. His past successes include such productions as "The Tenth Man"; "The Lion Has Wings"; "Dangerous Moonlight"; "Theirs Is the Glory"; "Hungry Hill"; and "Mark of Cain." His latest film is "Trottie True."

A LOT of the trouble with our present films lies in the weakness of the scripts. That isn't so surprising when you consider that writing for the screen is a very new branch of literature. In fact, it's hardly accepted at all by the leading writers. The Maughams and the Hemingways don't write for the screen—they may be "adapted" for it, but that's a quite different thing.

Original Stories Wanted

I think it's safe to say that the best films are those that are created originally in terms of the cinema. *Passport to Pimlico* is a very good example of this. And, moreover, I'm perfectly sure that no good films publicising Labour's achievements can be made without writers who believe in the Labour Party and its work.

I mean, say, for instance, that the Government wished to sponsor a film which would, without being a propaganda film as such, still put across the ideas behind the Labour policy for Britain. Well, it wouldn't be much good giving that assignment to the average screenwriter unless he really believed in the ideas he was expressing, because otherwise he would merely produce something which was mechanical and inevitably ineffective.

Encourage Young Writers

The Government should seriously consider some scheme for encouraging young writers who are sympathetic to the aims of the Labour Party—and I think that is true of the majority of the young writers of to-day—by giving them the chance of studying this new medium of expression and learning the technique of screenwriting.

Of course, I'm not forgetting that the cinema is an industry; that huge sums of money are involved; and that therefore public taste has to be considered very carefully. Unfortunately, however, the present method of making pictures is to consider public taste and nothing else, and then to get that taste wrong.

British Films "Phoney"

I think that one of the greatest weaknesses on the creative side of the British cinema to-day is its failure to cope with day-to-day reality. In their different ways, both the American and the

French cinemas have done this. But the everyday life of Britain —with its homes and shops, its hills and rivers, mines and offices —has not been interpreted to the world by our screenwriters and producers.

We don't yet seem to have found the way of getting into the heart of the daily scene and expressing it in terms of the cinema. We don't seem to realise the drama of the world we live in.

Time of Great Change

This is, after all, one of the great revolutionary periods of English history. The fact that the revolution doesn't include mangled corpses doesn't make it any the less a revolution!

There is drama everywhere. In the life of the miner; in the steelworker; and in the old aristocratic families, now finding a new vitality in the struggle for survival.

Everyone interested in the cinema should try to express this changing, dramatic world in terms that can be appreciated by the public who definitely are, within limits, keenly interested in the social developments of our time.

After all, the new health service is one of the greatest steps forward ever taken for the benefit of humanity. And yet, although it is over a year old, there has been no sort of reference to it in the cinema, even in joke. Surely such an achievement should inspire writers to use the film in order to let the whole world know.

Wrong People in Charge

But the cinema is geared to the question of financial returns; if a film is not obviously box office, it has very little chance of being made. *And the people who are in a position to say what films should be made are more often wrong than right. This is only too evident when you consider that, on an average, we only get one good film in ten.*

In my opinion, the sole hope for the British cinema is a degree of nationalisation. Three times I have seen our film industry almost ruined by private enterprise; whatever nationalisation may do, it cannot do worse than that!

And I do not believe that any limitations imposed by nationalisation will exceed those already imposed by private enterprise.

Film Reviews

(*Continued from page* 34)

Hobson as his patient understanding wife.

The story of the engine driver (Jack Warner) completes the quartet and although the tale is unconvincing there is some good acting, especially from Gladys Henson, as the driver's wife, and Susan Shaw, their difficult daughter.

THE LOST PEOPLE

Here is an example of a gross cinematic mistake. When a film has the advantages of a worthwhile story, some excellent actors, and a general topicality, there is little excuse for mishandling.

Dennis Price as an English army officer is alloted the task of sorting out a collection of refugees in a D.P. camp. He tells them in one of his many speeches that "democracy" is what they fought for; and that "democracy" is what they are going to get.

William Hartnell as the long-suffering sergeant is the only person who sees the funny side.

NEW MARKET FOR BRITISH FILMS

By Jacqueline Mallet

A FEW months ago the Trade Press went into a state of panic when the Government-controlled Film Finance Corporation announced that they proposed to make substantial loans to a new company formed for the purpose of making films for American television. For years, the British film industry had been withholding its products from Alexandra Palace as jealously as a sheik guards his harem; and it was mournfully anticipated that this interloper was about to render void all those ingenious barring clauses over which the film magnates burn their midnight oil.

If the films were sold to American television stations, why should they not be sold to Alexandra Palace? Why not indeed, cheerfully agreed the company in question, adding that the B.B.C. had already displayed considerable interest. Two or three similar companies have now been formed, one of them with plans to make television films in Australia.

Outlet for British Films

In America, all the major film distributors now have their own television department; and there is a great shortage of programme material. For American film producers, too, are canny about releasing their products to the television networks, who have bought large batches of British feature films—Rank has sold them six dozen, Korda upwards of 50, and Ealing studios recently shipped a further consignment.

Films are ideal for the television networks out there; for long-distance relays from a central point still leave something to be desired, though co-axial cables are being frantically laid at a cost of £2,000 a mile. If a film is despatched to one of the outlying TV stations, it can be put on at the peak time, or whenever desired.

Government Assistance

The company with the special government loan for making television films is Parthian Productions, formed by a young American television executive named Henry Hobhouse, who saw the possibilities of catering for the hundred U.S. stations, many of which are on the air for twelve hours a day.

His company has rented the Carlton Hill Studios, formerly a church hall. Although among the smallest in the country, the technical equipment is nevertheless first-class; these studios are ideal for the type of film the company is concentrating on at the moment.

One of the biggest successes on American 'vision is the Bunin Puppets programme; and as a rival to this, Parthian Productions are exporting a series of 12½-minute shorts featuring Muffin the Mule, probably the most popular character on British television. These cost about £500 each to

make; it is confidently expected that they will bring in a million dollars during the next year.

Another company, Vizio, Limited, are making a series of thrillers which run for about 26 minutes; and Jack Buchanan, stage and screen star, has a similar project in hand.

B.B.C. Co-operation

Although an ordinary film camera is used for these films, there are considerable differences in technique. Whereas in the film studios, three minutes' screen time is considered a good day's work, 28 minutes of television film are produced in the same period. In most cases directors are loaned by Alexandra Palace, on condition that, in return, the B.B.C. receives an option on the film.

These young men are trained to spend one day in technical preparation of a programme that runs for as long as ninety minutes. Of course, they have rehearsed it for two weeks previously, so the actors fully know their lines and movements. A similar routine is used for these special television films.

A single "take" lasting from three to five minutes is quite common, using two or three cameras and switching from one to another on the director's instructions, as they do at Alexandra Palace.

More Employment

It hasn't been any too easy to get film technicians into these new ways. They are accustomed to setting up lighting camera positions, and so on, at frequent intervals; and a sort of tradition has developed which has had to be broken in order that the production of television films is an economic proposition.

For a start, all the companies over here are concentrating on short programmes of 12½ or 26 minutes, which leave time for advertising material that brings them up to the standard 15- and 30-minute lengths; but there is a general feeling that much longer features will be planned before the end of the year.

The Vizio company use the Marylebone Studios, and it does look as if there will be a big demand for the smaller studios during the next few months. Which means that employment will be found for hundreds of actors and technicians.

For the past 20 years, the American cinema magnates have persistently refused to show British films on any large scale. Now, however, the biggest audiences in the history of American visual entertainment are going to get large slices of the English way of life brought right into their homes.

Book Guide

(*Continued from page* 35)

There should be a copy of it in every public library in the country.

NO SIMILARITY WHATEVER

We have received a copy of "Christopher Columbus," by Mario Ghisalberti (Heinemann, 15s., 768 pp.).

Gainsborough Pictures bought the film rights of this story. Ghisalberti attended the London premiere of the picture. His reaction?

"I am glad to say there is not the slightest similarity between the picture and my book."

FILM STARS RETURN TO THE STAGE

FILMGOERS who have admired Edith Evans' acting in "The Queen of Spades" and "Last Days of Dolwyn," should make an effort to see this outstanding artiste in yet another distinctive character part in "Daphne Laureola" at Wyndhams Theatre.

She is cast this time as a genteel dipsomaniac, and gives a truly amazing performance. For the first ten minutes after the curtain rises, Dame Edith does not utter a word, yet somehow contrives to be the centre of attraction on the stage.

She just sits and gazes into the distance, but at the same time contrives to convey the idea that she is beautifully drunk, without moving a muscle or flickering an eyelid.

Before visiting this play, I asked several people who had seen it to explain exactly what it was about. No two of them, however, gave the same answer.

It is, in fact, the most unusual play that has hit the West End since "The Skin of Your Teeth"; but it has been playing to capacity business for months, which shows that it strikes home with most people who see it.

Some may argue that Dame Edith's superb acting has fooled audiences into accepting a play about nothing very much that leads nowhere in particular.

But there are other really first-rate performances, notably from Peter Finch, as a displaced ex-Commando.

This young man from Australia seems remarkably at home in a broken English dialect as spoken by a native of Poland; and his forceful and sensitive emotional acting has now established him in the top rank of West End juvenile leads.

It is fairly safe to predict that, given the breaks, his name will be topping the cinema posters before the end of next year.

Also in the cast is that grand old stalwart, Frank Pettingell, who has been number one choice for Yorkshire character parts for more years than he probably cares to remember.

In this instance, he has lost some of his accent, but none of his sureness of touch.

Then there is Felix Aylmer, whom I last saw on the screen in a delightful performance in "Kind Hearts and Coronets." In "Daphne Laureola", he has the part of an aged millionaire, with a very realistic philosophy and a delicious sense of humour; and all his movements and inflections defy criticism.

Another play which will have a considerable appeal to film enthusiasts is "The Heiress," an adaptation of a novel by Henry James, which has just been bought by Hollywood for a fabulous sum.

In the production at the Haymarket Theatre is Ralph Richardson, who will doubtless be recognised by those who admired him as a butler in "The Fallen Idol," though on this occasion he plays a New York doctor of the 1850s.

It is a part that is continually on the verge of melodrama, and calls for his experience in avoiding this pitfall.

Opposite him, there is a beautiful piece of acting from Peggy

Ashcroft (what a pity the films have neglected this actress) as the thwarted heiress.

Also in the cast is James Donald, who contrived to dominate so many scenes in "Trottie True," and is now going in for film making on his own account.

He is a young actor with a very powerful personality and a commanding stage presence, and is seen to excellent effect in "The Heiress."

AUSTIN WELLAND

"Sauce Tartare"

If there is one thing about this Cecil Landeau revue at the Cambridge Theatre that strikes one very forcibly, it is the magnificent Houston. There are artistes and artistes, but "Sauce Tartare" proves that there is only one Renee. No show could go far wrong with a performer like this.

Not that this revue would be dull without Miss Houston—far from it. But as the "Sauce" is to the "Tartare," so is Renee to the show. And quite delightfully saucy at that.

Next impression comes as a clear-cut criticism—somebody's knuckles should be severely rapped over this; it's happening too often. When a musical show which has everything else lacks any semblance of tunefulness, it has succeeded in missing the bus.

The only melody from "Sauce Tartare" that is likely to "stick" is "You Like It Yes—You Like It No?" The Americans seem to be much more alert to this popularity factor than we are; "Annie Get Your Gun" and "Oklahoma" bristle with singable tunes.

"Sauce Tartare" numbers (lyrics by Geoffrey Parsons and music by Berkeley Fase) are mainly point numbers (clever ones at that) or rather too "arty" to be tuneful.

A big hand goes to Muriel Smith. This American singer has everything, though again one felt that her song numbers did not give the widest possible scope to her talents.

Jessie Matthews has a sweet stage personality and the secret of how to convey it to her audience. Joan Heal in her sketch, "I'm a Problem," shows that there's no problem about it—she's a cert. for things to come.

A dancer with a nice sense of rhythm is Sara Luzita; whilst Marlana's singing and dancing—particularly in the jungle scene, "Babalu"—deserves a word.

Jan Mazuras is quite a pleasant vocalist. The precision and authenticity of Miguelita and her Afro-Cubanos set the feet tapping. And both Ronald Frankau and Claude Hulbert are quite amusing and reliable in a number of sketches.

Verdict—well worth seeing.

PAT MILNE

SWITZERLAND

(*Continued from page* 17)

tained a prize for the best photography and editing, and another special prize was given to the American film, "Enchantment." Hilde Krahl's performance in "Liebe 47" was considered the best, and William Wellman received a prize for his direction of "Yellow Sky."

The Locarno Film Festival was very well organised and left a very definite impression on all those who were present.

Printed by Wyndham Printers Ltd., 3-5 Barrett St., W.1, and Published by the Proprietors, Precinct Publications, 50 Old Brompton Road, London, S.W.7. to whom all communications should be addressed.

TELEVISION WEEKLY

Britain's First
Television Newspaper

Brings you news of :

the shows,

the stars,

the producers,

the industry.

Single copy 4d.
Annual subscription 21s.

FROM ALL BOOKSTALLS
AND NEWSAGENTS

European
FILM
REVIEW

Printed in Switzerland

Supplied on Subscription only
Copy 2s. 7d.

Over 80 pages
beautifully illustrated

THE INTERNATIONAL
FILM MAGAZINE

A PRECINCT PUBLICATION

50 OLD BROMPTON ROAD,
S.W.7

FILM MONTHLY REVIEW

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

To—**Precinct Publications,**
50 Old Brompton Road, London, S.W.7

Please post "Film Monthly Review" to the address below for 12 issues. I enclose 10s., which includes postage, and I would be glad to receive a complimentary copy of "Film Monthly Review Annual."

Name .....

Address .....